

Washington D.C.- Congressman Steve King (R-IA) released the following statement after introducing H.R. 1093, the "Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Reform Act of 2011." The legislation reforms badly broken regulations which currently allow the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) to place unnecessary burdens on firearms dealers, law-abiding gun owners, and federal agents. King introduced the legislation with Rep. Jason Altmire (D-PA).

"Modernizing federal firearms regulations is necessary because the existing regulatory scheme undermines our Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms," said King. "H.R. 1093 makes significant improvements to BATFE's enforcement regulations that will allow the agency to perform its mission in a manner that upholds the constitutional rights of Americans."

The National Rifle Association has announced its support for King's legislation. Chris Cox, Executive Director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action issued the following statement following the bill's introduction:

"HR 1093 is a comprehensive reform bill that makes permanent several important appropriations funding restrictions that prevent law-abiding gun owners from unknowingly winding up in a federal gun registration database," said Cox. "This bill is a major step towards modernizing and improving BATFE's overall operations by compelling the bureau to focus their resources on targeting those who willfully violate the law while protecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners and retailers. For example, while current law does not make the necessary distinction between serious criminal violations and minor clerical errors, this bill corrects that inequity by creating a fair system in which firearms dealers with minor paperwork errors are not threatened with the loss of their livelihoods. NRA would like to thank Rep. King for his leadership on this pro-law enforcement bill."

Today, for most violations, BATFE has only two choices for reprimanding a Federal Firearms License (FFL) holder: issue a warning or revoke his or her license. This means FFL holders must operate their business under such strict scrutiny that their licenses can be threatened with revocation for minor violations such as the improper use of abbreviations or the filing of records in the wrong order. King's legislation would provide greater flexibility to this system by allowing fines or license suspensions for less serious violations, while permitting license revocation for serious violations.

Additional reforms made by King's legislation include:

- Directing that the number of warnings, suspensions, revocations, or amounts fined shall not be a factor in firing, promoting or transferring agents.
- Clarifying the standard to be used for determining willful violations of law.
- Ending the BATFE regulation requiring border state gun dealers to report the sale of multiple firearms with a caliber .22 or larger and a removable clip.
- Directing that a suspension or fine be vacated if a court determines a licensee did not willfully violate the law with attorney's fees awarded to cleared defendants.
- Easing the restrictions on the importation of replacement parts for semiautomatic rifles.
- Banning the creation of a centralized electronic database out of business dealers' records.

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